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News Bulletin

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CIA SAID PLANNING AID TO REBELS WITH AN EXTRA \$400

WASHINGTON, July 24, Reuter - The CIA is planning to provide Nicaraguan rebels with indirect support worth \$400 million in addition to a request for \$100 million in direct aid now pending in Congress, a key Senator said today.

Senate Democratic Leader Robert Byrd in a floor speech said that he independently confirmed a Newsweek report that the Central Intelligence Agency was preparing to give the rebels covert logistical support, training, communications and intelligence worth the equivalent of \$400 million."

The contra rebels are fighting the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

This information was verified by a responsible American embassy official in Honduras on July 7, 1986," the West Virginia Democrat said.

This official indicated that it was correct that the CIA intended to provide unappropriated aid that could reach that amount," he said, adding that it would be "in addition to the requested \$100 million in appropriated aid."

He said this indicated "a level of potential American involvement that the American people are not aware of; I have certainly not been appraised of, nor my colleagues."

Byrd quoted the official as saying the CIA would purchase materials that would be turned over to the contra rebels but to which the CIA would retain legal title.

This would appear to be a kind of capital investment program," Byrd said.

The House last month approved Reagan's request for \$100 million in mostly military aid for the rebels, who seek to overthrow Managua's Sandinista government.

The aid package is pending before the Senate, where liberal Democrats have threatened to wage a marathon debate -- called a filibuster -- to block a vote on the funding.

Senate Republican Leader Robert Dole of Kansas has been trying to work a deal in which Democrats would promise not to filibuster on contra aid in return for promised votes on two other issues of great importance to them -- South Africa sanctions and the SALT-2 arms control treaty.

So far, no agreement has been reached.

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